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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 4, 9-11, 14, 17-24, 26-28, 30-33, 36-68, 70-71, 84-90, 95-98, 101, 103, 106, 108-114, 116-121, 127, 129-130 and 138-142 are now all canceled claims. New claims 142-159 have been added and are presented for consideration by the Examiner.

Applicant notes that claim 136 has been amended to correct the claim dependency.

To address the remaining objection based on 35 USC 112, the language of claim 7, lines 4-5 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

A new paragraph [0052.1] has been added to the specification to provide language consistent with the language in the current set of claims.

As a preliminary comment relating to the prior art rejections of the claims, it should be noted that all pending independent claims now recite a panel member made from a foam plastic. In rejecting several of the former independent claims as obvious, the Examiner cites the combination of MacDonald and Carroll, and Caine and Carroll. However, Applicant does not accept that it is obvious to modify the concrete slab D of Caine or the pre-cast slab unit 22 of MacDonald with a polystyrene panel 13 of Carroll. For example, Applicant notes that the Caine and MacDonald references are decades old, reflecting the longstanding use of concrete slabs in forming concrete roofs or floors. Applicant is unaware of the prior use of foam plastic to provide for formwork for floors and ceilings. Concrete slabs such as disclosed in MacDonald or Caine do not require reinforcement like a foam plastic panel in order to fulfill the function of providing part of a formwork system for roofs or floors to support above unhardened construction material such as concrete. Applicant is not aware of any prior art which recognized that with appropriate reinforcing of a foam plastic panel, that

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such a panel could be used in a formwork assembly used to form a floor/roof/ceiling slab. Accordingly, Applicant reserves the right to continue to seek patent protection directed to this broad concept in a new related application.

Nevertheless, to advance the prosecution of this present application the remaining pending independent claims have been further amended.

As a further preliminary comment, Applicant notes that Applicant has recognized that in reinforcing a foam plastic panel member, the foam plastic should be reinforced in a different manner to the reinforcement of a concrete slab. Applicant has thus invented a system that is adapted for reinforcing of a foam panel member so that it can be used in a form system/assembly suitable for forming a slab for a floor/roof/ceiling.

Applicant notes that claims 1 and 55 have been canceled and new independent claim 144 has been added. It is believed the subject matter of new claim 144 is clearly distinguished from the MacDonald and Caine references. Claim 144 provides inter alia that the panel member is supported by a reinforcement unit at at least one intermediate position that is transversely and longitudinally between and distant from the side edges and the front and rear edges respectively of the panel member. Rather than support a foam panel only proximate its front, rear and side edges, a reinforcement unit provides both support for the panel at one or more locations that are distant from the side, front and rear edges when subjected to the weight of unhardened construction material. The reinforcement unit also serves to carry the load from the unhardened construction material transversely from those one or more intermediate locations to the structural support member. Thus, for example, support can be provided for the panel member at the center of the panel member, and then load associated with unhardened construction material bearing on the panel member at a

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center location of the panel member can be transferred transversely from such center location by the reinforcement unit.

Additionally claims 144 recites that the reinforcement unit has a first portion with a rigidly connected interconnected vertical section and a generally oriented horizontal section. The horizontal section has a generally horizontally, longitudinally and transversely extending and upwardly directed surface that supports and reinforces the panel member proximate a lower surface of the panel member. As is evident in Figures 1 to 2c, connectors 120 have a rigidly interconnected vertical shaft section and a horizontally oriented head or cap section. Note also connectors 220 in Figures 4 and 4a. The cap section has a horizontally, longitudinally and transversely extending and upward directed surface that supports the panel member to help support the load of unhardened construction material above it. It is respectfully submitted that none of the prior art references alone or in combination teach or suggest a reinforcement unit with such a configuration that is used to support and reinforce a foam plastic panel member used as formwork for a floor or ceiling.

By contrast, neither MacDonald nor Caine provides a system in which the panel members are supported by a reinforcement unit at one or more intermediate positions that are transversely and longitudinally between and distant from the side edges and the front and rear edges respectively of the panel member. In neither Caine nor MacDonald can load be carried by a reinforcement unit from such an intermediate location transversely to a structural support member.

Independent claim 75 has also been amended to more clearly distinguish from the prior art references cited by the Examiner. In particular claim 75 now provides that the at least one reinforcement unit has one or more components all of which contribute only to

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supporting only the panel member of the form panel unit with which it is associated and no other panel members. Thus each reinforcement unit is exclusively associated with one panel member, and thus a self-contained panel unit is provided that can be readily utilized in a formwork system.

By contrast, the features identified in Caine as "b" in Figures 1, 4, 5, "c" in Figure 2 and "g" in Figure 6 are all employed to support several slabs D. Likewise, in MacDonald, feature 21 in Figures 1, 2, 6 and 8 are employed to support slab units 22. Thus neither Caine nor MacDonald disclosed the use of a self contained form panel unit that can be readily transported and deployed as required.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 75 as amended is patentable over the prior art of record.

Independent claims 99, 128 and 137 have been also amended to incorporate one or more of the foregoing features, and thus it is submitted that each of these claims is also patentable over the prior art cited by the Examiner.

Claim 128 has also been amended to recite inter alia that the reinforcement unit comprises an upper compression member positioned above the upper surface of the panel such that the panel member is compressed. This feature assists in reinforcing the panel member so it can function as part of a formwork system.

Furthermore, claim 134 has also been amended to provide that the form panel unit is configured so as to be capable of being mounted on the supporting member by vertical movement downwards of the panel unit including the panel member relative to the supporting member. It is submitted that this further distinguishes claim 134 from the prior art cited by the Examiner.

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Applicant kindly acknowledges the Examiner's indication that the subject matter of previously submitted claim 5 was directed to allowable subject matter. Accordingly, independent claim 91 has also been amended and now recites that the reinforcement unit has a panel support member with at least a portion that extends within the panel member between proximate an upper surface of the panel member and proximate a lower surface of said panel member. It is submitted that this feature which assists in enabling the foam plastic panel member to function as a part of a formwork assembly, is not disclosed in either Caine or MacDonald and therefore that claim 91 as amended is patentable over the prior art.

Independent claims 128 and 134 have also been amended in such a similar manner to claim 91.

New independent claims 148, 149, 150, 151, 155, 156, 158 and 159 have also been added and are presented for consideration by the Examiner. All claims are believed to be fully supported by the original application as filed and read on elected species of Figure 4.

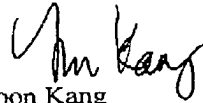
With respect to support for new claim 149 which recites the first portion supporting the form panel unit in at least three intermediate positions, applicant notes that Figure 4 illustrates the use of three connectors 220.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favourable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Yoon Kang
Registration No. 40,386

SMART & BIGGAR
438 University Avenue
Suite 1500, Box 111
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5G 2K8
Telephone: (416) 593-5514
Facsimile: (416) 591-1690

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